

AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Quiet Professionals

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM LESSONS LEARNED



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AFSOC/DO

U.S. AIR FORCE





U.S. AIR FORCE

FORCES SUMMARY

AS OF 1 FEB 03

- **MC-130E/H COMBAT TALON I & II**
- **MC-130P COMBAT SHADOW**
- **AC-130H/U GUNSHIPS**
- **MH-53 PAVE LOW HELICOPTER**
- **EC-130 COMMANDO SOLO**
- **720th SPECIAL TACTICS GROUP**





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MC-130E/H COMBAT TALON I & II



TYPE MISSIONS:

INFIL / EXFIL, RESUPPLY, AIRDROP,
AIRLAND, BLU-82, HAR, PSYOP,
HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

SORTIES FLOWN:

MC-130E 1,718

MC-130H 1,106

HOURS FLOWN:

MC-130E 4,351

MC-130H 5,172



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MC-130P COMBAT SHADOW



TYPE MISSIONS:

**HELO AIR REFUELING, SEARCH
AND RESCUE, INFIL/ EXFIL,
AIRDROP, AIRLAND**

SORTIES FLOWN: 1,082

HOURS FLOWN: 3,481



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AC-130H/U GUNSHIPS



TYPE MISSIONS:

CAS, ARMED RECCE, ARMED
INTERDICTION, C2 RELAY

SORTIES FLOWN: 1,238

AC-130H: 621

AC-130U: 617

HOURS FLOWN: 8,124

AC-130H 3,093

AC-130U 5,031



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MH-53 PAVE LOW HELICOPTER



TYPE MISSIONS:

INFIL/EXFIL, CSAR

SORTIES FLOWN: 1,053

HOURS FLOWN: 2,431



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EC-130

COMMANDO SOLO



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TYPE MISSION:

**PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS
BROADCASTS**

SORTIES FLOWN: 373

HOURS FLOWN: 2,888



AFSOC SPECIAL TACTICS GROUP



TYPE MISSION:

SR/DA/SSE/UW

AUSTERE AIRFIELD OPS:

CONT'L 8,100 SORTIES

TERMINAL ATTACK CTRL:

630 TERMINAL AIR STRIKES

C2 OF UAV'S

2.2 MIL LBS OF BOMBS

PERSONNEL RECOVERY:

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS/

INCIDENTS



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AFSOC ***LESSONS LEARNED***

C2ISR

- **LIMITED C2ISR ASSETS (AWACS, JSTARS, RIVET JOINT, PREDATOR) AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT SOF.**
 - **SOF OPERATIONS NOT FULLY COORDINATED WITH C2ISR ASSETS DUE TO:**
 - **STOVEPIPED FUNCTIONS**
 - **OVER CLASSIFICATION**
 - **ATO REQUIREMENTS FOR SOF GROUND/AIRBORNE ALERTS**
 - **SOLUTION: FULLY INTEGRATE SOLE IN ALL FUNCTIONS**
 - **SOF LACKED KNOWLEDGE OF CAF C2ISR AND EW CAPABILITIES/EMPLOYMENT LIMITATIONS**
 - **SOF'S DESIRE TO BE "CLANDESTINE"**
 - **LACK OF COORDINATION/COMMUNICATION WITH CFACC**
 - **SOLUTION: "SPREAD THE WORD" & INTEGRATED SOLE**
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AFSOC LESSONS LEARNED

UAV's

- **UAV INTEGRATION GREATLY INCREASED AC-130 EFFECTIVENESS**
 - **ACQUIRED ABILITY TO INTEGRATE UAV'S INTO TERMINAL ATTACK CONTROL OPERATIONS**

 - **SUCCESS OF TACTICAL UAV'S**
 - **ROUTE RECON**
 - **FORCE PROTECTION**
 - **VIEWING AVENUES OF APPROACH**
 - **POSITIVE TARGET ID**
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AFSOC ***LESSONS LEARNED***

INTEGRATION/DECONFLICTION

- **AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES DID NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AVAILABLE DECONFLICTION SYSTEMS (BLUE FORCE TRACKING, SADL, LINK-16)**
 - **LACK OF TRAINING/EDUCATION AND CONOPS**
 - **FILTERING OF BFT SIGNALS**

 - **SOLUTION: GET COP TO THE FIELD; TRAINING AT SOF UNIVERSITY**
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LESSONS LEARNED

FIRES

- **TARGETS WERE FRAGGED INSIDE KNOWN RESTRICTED FIRE AREAS/NO FIRE AREAS ESTABLISHED IN THE AOC. TARGET DECONFLICTION DEFAULTED TO THE SOLE**
 - **FRATRICIDE**
 - **C2ISR AND CAF WERE PROVIDED LIMITED INFORMATION ON SOF TEAM OPERATIONS/LOCATION – SEVERAL CLOSE CALLS**
 - **NAVIGATIONAL PROCEDURES/AWARENESS – ONE FRATRICIDE INCIDENT**
 - **THERE WAS NO FIRE SUPPORT CELL IN THE CJTF TO DECONFLICT OPERATIONS WITH THE GROUND FORCE COMMANDER**
 - **SOLUTION: LOCATED AN ACCE WITH CJTF**
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LESSONS LEARNED

SYSTEMS INTEROPERABILITY

- **LACK OF COMMONALITY (DATUM AND FORMAT) AMONG THE SERVICES (WGS 72 VS 84)...COORDINATION IMPACTED**
 - **LED TO DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFYING HLZ, DZ, FRIENDLY AND ENEMY TARGET LOCATIONS**

 - **AIR UNITS DID NOT ALWAYS UTILIZE SAME COORDINATE SYSTEM AS GROUND UNITS (LAT/LONG VS. GRID)**
 - **SOLUTIONS: EXCHANGE OF LNO'S; EDUCATE NEW UNITS AS THEY ARRIVE, CONTINUED JOINT EXERCISES/TRAINING**
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AFSOC ***LESSONS LEARNED***

PSYOPS CAMPAIGN

- **LIMITED FEEDBACK TO COMMANDO SOLO ON QUALITY/PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS OF BROADCAST**
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LESSONS LEARNED

“EXTREME” OPERATIONS

- **AIRCRAFT OPERATED ON THE MARGINS**
 - **HIGH GROSS WEIGHTS/PRESSURE ALTITUDES/ TEMPERATURES**
 - **HELO A/R OPERATIONS CONDUCTED AT 10,000 FT.**
 - **LOW LEVEL OPERATIONS 10-15,000 FT.**
 - **AIRDROP PROFILES (HIGH ALT MASS CDS AIRDROPS)**
 - **IMPOSING ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES LIKE “TALCUM POWDER” DUST AND “LOW VISIBILITY CONTRAST RIDGELINES”**
 - **SOLUTION: LIMIT THOSE MISSIONS IN THESE ENVIRONMENTS; MANAGE RISK OF THOSE MISSIONS THAT ARE “MUST DO”; EDUCATE INCOMING CREWS WITH LESSONS LEARNED; VALUE OF KIRTLAND TRAINING**
 - **AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE INADEQUATE FOR LONG DURATION HIGH ALTITUDE OPERATIONS**
 - **SOLUTION: SHORT TERM: ADDITIONAL CLOTHING**
LONG TERM: AIRCRAFT MODIFICATION
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AFSOC SPECIAL TACTICS LESSONS LEARNED

- **SPECIAL TACTICS**
 - **AIRMEN ON THE GROUND GREATLY ENHANCED AIRPOWER EFFECTS**
 - **HANDOFF OF ST AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS TO CONVENTIONAL FORCES DELAYED FOLLOW-ON OPERATIONS**
 - **TERMINAL CONTROL IS NOT MERELY CAS BUT MORE ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AS BATTLEFIELD AIR OPERATIONS (BAO)**
 - **TACTICAL UAV'S – FORCE MULTIPLIER!**
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■ FINAL THOUGHTS

- OEF WAS A SPECIAL OPERATIONS WAR**
 - THERE WERE MANY “LESSONS LEARNED”**
 - HAVE TAKEN CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**
 - NEXT CONFLICT, DEPENDING ON TIMING, COULD BE FOUGHT BY SAME WARRIORS – WON’T HAVE TO RE-LEARN LESSONS!**
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QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

